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Solidarity

APRIL 1998

NEW LABOUR:

GETTING AWAY WITH WHAT THE TORIES COULDN'T

There's more to a bucket of water on John Prescott at the Brit awards than just a soaking Deputy Prime Minister and an anarchist pop performer.... New Labour itself is ALL WET and Chumbawamba's Danbert Nobacon was just expressing the sentiments of a growing lot of people. Duped into voting one bunch of wankers in for another, people are now seeing the true face of Phoney Blair and his political hack dupies as they try to implement programmes far worse than the Tories would ever had dared- because we would not have let them! Would we have let the Tories blatently attack the well-being of society's most vunerable members- the poor, the unemployed, single parents, the disabled? Read below how the government is eroding the rights of workers as well- alienating an ever-wider spectrum of society.. and how people can (and are!) fighting back.

THE NEW DEAL IS A DIRTY DEAL

New labour's "New Deal" is being heralded as help for the young unemployed. In reality it is a massive attack on both the unemployed and on those in a job.

From April 1998, 18-24 year olds unemployed over 6 months will be forced to undergo a series of interviews, designed to pressure them into any old crap job. Those who don't get a job will then be forced into one of 4 "options": 1) A low paid temporary six month job, 2) A limited range of courses, only getting £40 benefits per week, 3)Working for their benefits, plus £15 per week, for a voluntary organisation, 4) The same, on the environmental task force.. Anyone refusing these crap "choices" will have their benefit cut, initially for 2 weeks.

This is a huge step towards a USA-style workfare system where claimants have to work for bosses in return for benefits. Next in line are the unemployed over 25's , single parents and the disabled.

The New Deal also attacks everyone in a job. It's a massive extension of casualisation - more low paid temporary jobs and more compulsory work for benefits undermines everyone's wages and conditions. The employed and the unemployed need to get together to take real action . It's useless relying on the trade union bosses. We need to organise ourselves.

In France unemployed demanding benefit increases have occupied benefit offices, liberated trolley loads of food from supermarkets, and demonstrated in their thousands, showing the potential power of the unemployed. Unemployed direct action would show there is opposition to the New Deal, and encourage resistance in the workplace. It is in workers' interests to pressurise their employers to boycott the New Deal.

In Edinburgh workers from voluntary organisations like Womens Aid, the Stafford Centre, WHALE, Lothian Anti Poverty Alliance, and Pilton Partnership have spoken out against the New Deal. We need to encourage/pressurise voluntary organisations to boycott the Voluntary Sector and Environmental Task Force options.

Resisting the New Deal will not be easy, but it is vital - the alternative is passively accepting a gradual move to compulsory slave labour for claimants.

Edinburgh Claimants 0131 557 6242. Groundswell (UK-wide network) 01865 723750.

WAGE SLAVERY

Labour make out a job is nirvana. In most jobs you are poorly paid, bored, get ordered about, and slave away to benefit a boss or the state. Only if people rebel and take the world's resources into all our hands will we be able to decide what work to do, and how to do it, only then will work be enjoyable and satisfying.

CLAIMANTS DEFY COURT AND CARRY OUT *3RD STRIKE* ACTION

On 11 February 1998 Edinburgh Sheriff Court sentenced a claimant to 150 hours community service for "Breach of the Peace" for delivering an Edinburgh Claimants "3 Strikes" warning letter to a Benefits Office official at High Riggs Unemployment benefit office. Four hours later 20 claimants and supporters carried out a 3rd Strike action against Marianne MacDonald, a Project Work interviewer at High Riggs, and her manager Mr Laird.

Demonstrators - all wearing masks consisting of Marianne MacDonald's face! - stormed into the benefit office. They carried posters of MacDonald with the slogan NO ONE LIKES A BULLY.

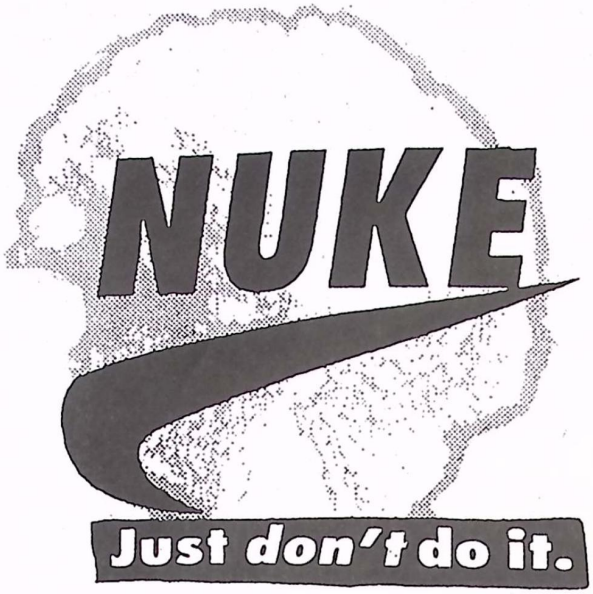
Protesters gave out leaflets bearing MacDonald's photo and detailing how she had consistently harassed claimants and tried to cut their benefits on 8 documented occasions. The leaflets denounced Labour's New Deal as "compulsory slave labour" and condemned the cuts in single parent's benefits. Police arrived too late to stop the action.

The 3 Strikes campaign resists harassment and benefit cuts - dole officials and their managers who treat claimants particularly badly are given warning letters asking them to treat claimants fairly : if they ignore 2 warnings and commit a 3rd "offence" then their photo is taken and put on posters with info on their actions, and a demo held at their benefit office.

Edinburgh Claimants declare "We won't be intimidated by the police and courts. The 3 Strikes resistance continues. **Everyone should step up their activities. Resistance to attacks on claimants must continue, and link with the wider struggle against all exploitation."**

Harassed by a dole bully? Ring Edinburgh Claimants 0131 557 6242

FASLANE EVICTION LOOMS



After 15 years of protesting against Faslane Nuclear Submarine Base, the peace campers were in an initial court hearing on the 18th of February. Not that the campers are any strangers to the dock- having accumulated ***well*** over 1000 arrests for peacefully campaigning, stopping convoys of deadly warheads and boarding nuclear submarines! A date was set for April 1st at which time Argyll and Bute Council will ask for an official eviction date for the camp. After 15 years of officially recognised tenancy, the camp fell into danger because the shifting of council boundaries- and since the 28th of July they have been considered squatters under the Housing Act.

IMMEDIATE THREAT

If the hearing goes badly, an eviction operation could start as early as the next morning, silencing the protest against this nuclear madness forever. So the camp needs as many people as possible to get involved ASAP! Once the eviction starts it will be near impossible to gain access to the camp. Also needed are scaffolding poles and clips, tarpaulins, clothes, veg/food, contacts with sympathetic organisations, DONATIONS, and most importantly- KEEN SOULS!

Ring the camp on 01436 820901 if you want to help or just send a message of support!

SUPPORT THE CAMP IN STYLE-

Special Faslane Peace Camp "NUKE- just don't do it" T-shirts (pictured above) are available c/o ACE (see contact list) for £6 incl. postage. Proceeds go straight to the camp.. so wear it with pride when you fight the eviction!

Brian the Snail MP

Skye Campaign Against Tolls have condemned the new Labour Government's failure to remove the extortionate tolls on the Skye Bridge. "The people who were to become the Labour government promised to take the tolls off and that promise has not been upheld. So, what's a promise worth?" said Gavin Scott Moncrieff of the campaign.

Local Labour MP Brian Wilson has been enraged by posters sprouting all over Skye portraying him as Brian the Snail from the Magic Roundabout, and condemning his inaction on the issue.

Over 300 people have been charged for refusing to pay Skye Bridge tolls. In December Andy Anderson was remanded in jail for 8 days for consistently refusing to pay the highest bridge tolls in Europe to bridge owners the Bank of America

KENNETH RICHEY UPDATE

Ohio state has executed Wilfred Berry; its first execution in 35 years. Soon it may be the turn of Edinburgh born and bred Kenneth Richey who has spent 12 years on death row protesting his innocence. But the tide is turning in his favour with his original 'state defender' admitting incompetence on World in Action (12.1.98). Here the government hopes to reduce legal aid costs by taking away defendants' rights to choose their own lawyer. This makes frame-ups easier. If you want to find out more about Kenny's case or to help campaign for a new fair trial, phone Karen on 0141 641 0364.

events

Faslane Peace Camp Benefit- Thurs, March 19th.. Kenning Park Community Centre, Kenning Park Underground 7.30pm

Critical Mass- Glasgow- last Sat of the month (March 28th) at 2pm Byres Road/University Avenue.. Edinburgh- last Friday of the month (March 27th)5.30pm at the Mound.

The Big Blether- March 28-29 at Monimail Tower, Fife. direct action and D.I.Y. camipaign gathering, workshops and discussions. Contact: 01555 820555, Birkhill House, Lanarkshire ML11 0NJ

Benefit Gigs for the ACE (at the Tap of Lauriston, Edinburgh) Sat. March 28th- Rocka ragnarok + support . gigs available April 18, May 16, June 20, July 18, bands interested in playing for travel expenses only contact ACE on 0131 557 6242.

Radical Book Fair- May 14-16th in Edinburgh, contact 0131 662 9112

May Day '98 in Bradford- 1-4 May in conjunction with the 1 in 12 Club's annual Reclaim MayDay events and march.. a conference on struggles for social change. Details from POBox HH57, Leeds LS8 5XG, http://www.gocities.com/picketfence/1155

We encourage and assist resistance to all oppression. This includes economic and environmental exploitation and all forms of state and social repression, such as racism and sexism.

Mass direct action is the most effective and liberating form of struggle.

Our aim is for mass struggles to develop into a revolutionary transformation, in which people seize control of the world's resources and fundamentally re-organise society.

This can only be achieved by the self-organisation of the vast majority, the working class. We oppose all heirarchies and political parties.

We want a free, stateless world, with social wealth owned and controlled by society. Production will be to meet human need and all relationships based on equality and mutual respect

cont@cts

AUTONOMOUS CENTRE OF EDINBURGH / EDINBURGH CLAIMANTS 17 West Montgomery Place, Edinburgh EH7 5HA Scotland. 0131 557 6242 ace@punk.org.uk
Open: Claimants: Tuesdays 12-4pm; Info-Shop: Thurs and Sundays 2-6pm (Discussion groups the last Sun of every month). Meetings Mondays 7.30pm.
(Contact anarchists in Dundee, Dunfermline, and Aberdeen c/o ACE address.)

SCOTTISH ANARCHIST NETWORK/ GLASGOW ANARCHISTS
c/o Box A, Fahrenheit 451 Bookshop, Virginia Galleries, Virginia Street, Glasgow (Glasgow's radical bookshop) email:anarcho@geocities.com

GLASGOW LIBERTARIAN WOMEN
meet and organise events around womens' issues. Contact c/o Glasgow Anarchists.

AK PRESS & DISTRIBUTION
send a large SASE for a catalogue of radical books, magazines, T-shirts, counterculture and lots of interesting.. things. POBox 12766 Edinburgh EH8 9YE. 0131 555 5165

WORD POWER
43 West Nicholson Street, Edinburgh EH8 4DB. 0131 662 9112.